648 ous, the Russians have infiltrated Afghanistan. Therefore, Hunza is now completely hemmed in by what I would call the bamboo, the iron and the stone curtains.

I can't visualize where the Mir has too much to fear from Communist aggression. From what I have seen and learned, the Communists like their spots plush, soft and succulent. None of these conditions exist in Hunza!

The Communists like locations where they can eventually, if not immediately, take out more than they put in. That would never take place in Hunza. Then, too, people who have chosen to live on the north bank of the Hunza River would not be easily shackled
[643] or enslaved. Admittedly, the Mir is an absolute monarch but there are no signs of that type of rule in evidence anywhere in Hunza. There's a parallel in England. While England has a queen, a monarch whom the people respect and revere, whom they would follow in life and in death, the monarch would never make demands on her people.

I do not believe there is a more democratic nation on the face of the globe than Great Britain . . . and that includes the United States or other republics. I believe the same situation holds true in Hunza.

Another point to be considered by possible invaders is . . . What would they gain besides possible armed conflicts with Pakistan and perhaps India?

[353] No, I would suggest that Hunza is comparatively safe from communist aggression and the Mir can afford to have the communist propaganda pictures on the walls of his summer bungalow in Altit as a gesture of friendship.

• 247 177 The yard or garden around the bungalow[1] was aglow with flowers of every description and hue imaginable.

[1] [ie. of the Mir - ANALYST]

They were obviously of American or European origin . . . probably grown from seeds that someone had sent him. Plants like zinnias, snapdragons and asters were readily recognizable.

Then, I was very much surprised to see in front of the bungalow, of all things, a swimming pool . . . and the youth of the district were swimming and enjoying themselves to the fullest possible extent. They were shouting, laughing, splashing and cavorting about just as you would expect boys and girls to do in any swimming pool in America. They displayed the same reckless abandon, glee and happiness that our children do.

At this time I thought to myself that here was another mark of the Mir's bigness. He was allowing the children of the town to make full use of his personal family swimming pool. This was quite different from what most people expect of eastern potentates.

I'm not sure that this little incident impresses you but I assure you I was quite impressed by it. It added to my conviction that the people of Hunza were really free and democratic.

A little way off were our yaks and their guides. "Let's go," I said to Jahangir and Sultan Ali, making straight for the yaks. "The Mir and Cec will be waiting for us, so I guess we'd best be off."

I selected the larger of the two yaks because I'm quite a bit heavier, or almost twice as heavy as Jahangir. I was assisted on to the yak's back and the yak didn't seem to be too happy about it! For the first time since I'd been riding, which wasn't very long, I felt really comfortable. The well-padded broad back of the animal was delightful to sit on and, best of all, he had a western style saddle. I'm always afraid of falling off a horse with those English saddles because I've got nothing to hold on to except the reins and for my kind of

137 I've tried to locate it in my botanical encyclopedias but so far have met with failure. It appeared to be an annual but such a robust growing annual I have never known before in my life. (It could have been an herbaceous perennial—I'm not 100% certain. But I do know it started from the surface because there was no old wood or old stems on any of the thousands of plants that I saw and the hundreds that I examined closely.

If you know the winter creeper, or euonymus, then you can quickly understand what this fog plant looked like. It seemed to thrive in practically any location that would give succor to a living plant. In some places it was small and compact. In other locations it grew large and sprawling. It grew out of the rocks and hung down. It grew against the sides of the mountains and climbed up. It resembled, in many instances, a low growing shrub, but it was entirely void of wood. In other cases it grew erect and in still other places I found it sprawling around the ground in a wide area, making an excellent ground cover.

It is my estimate that I did not come across more than 30 different types of perennials or annual herbs. I am sure you will agree that it is understandable that the flora of this area would not be wide or tremendous.

133 Undoubtedly the valleys along the Nagir side were more lush, looked better and were larger than the cultivated areas along the Hunza side. One of the reasons for this condition is the fact that the Hunza side is more precipitous and the walls of the canyon or mountains are steeper and more sheer, leaving less opportunity for soil to accumulate, be cultivated and grow plants.

• 247 In the homes, from my observations, and I made careful study of this aspect, I did not see a sign of one

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

single house plant. This applies to the Nagir side as well. Of course this is readily understandable when you realize that they have no glass or light. The only light they would have in a Hunzan home would be the bit that streaks in from the hole in the roof or through the doorway. This lack of light would not be conducive to growing plants indoors.

I recognized and found one lone dandelion plant and believe me, when I found it, my heart was glad, gladder than it would have been if I'd found a beautiful rose. It has always been my belief and contention that dandelions are found where'er plant life can survive and this plant bore out (to a degree) my lifelong contention. As long as a dandelion can be found, one need not fear starvation. The greens of the dandelion, especially when young and tender, make delicious salads . . . but remember, be sure to get the young tender shoots. The roots are roasted and ground, and they make a beverage that some authorities say is as good as coffee. The root can also be used the same as parsnips. Herbalists prescribe dandelion coffee for dyspepsia, gout and rheumatism and they claim, with sincerity, that it possesses most beneficial properties for such ailments. It is also recommended by the herbalists for kidney and liver disorders and Potter says it is perhaps one of the most generally prescribed remedies . . . "It may be given in any form but its beneficial action is best obtained when combined with other agents." Now besides all the above virtues, its flowers and milky stalks make delicious wine.

This one single lone dandelion—the only one I saw on my trek—had caught a foothold in a crevice of a rock and was growing on this steep wall. I felt like embracing it and pressing it to my heart. But if I had,